

MAKE YOUR BUSINESS GROW.
ADVERTISE IN

DAWN INDUSTRY SUPPLEMENTS

Call Manager Supplements in
Karachi Lahore or Islamabad
on UAN: 111-444-777

DAWN

RAISE YOUR COMPANY'S
ADVERTISE IN

DAWN COUNTRY SUPPLEMENTS

Call Manager Supplements in
Karachi Lahore or Islamabad
on UAN: 111-444-777

FCC to use apex court rules until it frames its own

• Space constraints at Constitution Avenue premises prompt flurry of meetings • IHCBA chief claims high court won't be dislodged from current location, for now

By Nasir Iqbal and Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC), in a full court meeting, unanimously resolved to adopt the Supreme Court Rules 2025, mutatis mutandis, for its practice and procedure until it frames its own rules.

The decisions taken at the full court meeting, which was held on Nov 17 and approved by the FCC chief justice, have also been notified for implementation.

In pursuance of the decisions taken, it has been decided that every case, appeal, petition, or matter would be heard and disposed of by a bench consisting of no fewer than two judges, to be nominated by the FCC CJ.

Likewise, appeals arising out of judgments passed by a division bench will be heard by a bench comprising no fewer than three FCC judges, to be nominated by its chief justice.

The decisions also indicated that members of the bar enrolled as senior advocates of the Supreme Court, advocates of the SC, and advocates-on-record were entitled to appear before the FCC as senior advocates, advocates, and advocates-on-record, respectively, on a provisional basis until further orders.

The notification will take effect immediately and remain operative until modified or superseded. It has also been dispatched to the attorney general of Pakistan (AGP), the registrar of the SC and other courts, the law ministry, etc.

'No relocation for now'

Meanwhile, a top office-bearer of the Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) said on Wednesday that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) would not be relocated from its prestigious Constitution Avenue site for now — temporarily ending a period of uncertainty that has gripped the capital's legal community.

Syed Wajid Ali Gillani, president of the association, made the announcement after meeting Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar.

"The law minister assured us that the IHC would stay at the Constitution Avenue at least for the time being," Gillani told *Dawn*, a statement he said was echoed by IHC Chief Justice Sardar Mohammad Sarfraz Dogar.

The announcement comes amid a backdrop of significant upheaval, as the newly established FCC begins operations within

the IHC building, a move that has triggered internal reshuffling and rumours of dissent among the high court's judges.

The issue kicked off when the government decided to establish FCC at the Federal Shariat Court (FSC) building. The FSC judges were asked to move into courtrooms on the third floor of the IHC.

When the FSC judges resisted their shifting, the FCC was temporarily set up in the premises of the IHC.

However, sources said that the judges of the FCC wanted permanent premises and for this purpose, the IHC building was also among the options under consideration.

FCC CJ meets law minister, AGP

The situation reached a critical point on Tuesday night, leading to a series of high-level meetings.

FCC Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan met the law minister and Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan in his chamber on Wednesday to discuss the issue.

This was preceded by a late-night meeting between the FCC CJ and IHC CJ Dogar to sort out the functioning of both courts sharing the same premises.

The tension was visibly on display during the recent oath-taking ceremonies for FCC judges.

While Justice K. K. Agha took his oath on Saturday in a "congested conference room", his ceremony, and one held the day prior, were notably boycotted by a group of IHC judges.

Justices Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Babar Sattar, Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri, Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, and Saman Rafat Imtiaz were absent from both events, a move that has drawn intense speculation within the legal circles.

Their collective absence fuelled widespread rumours throughout Saturday that several IHC judges were preparing to resign.

Although the staff of Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan denied rumors of his resignation after they circulated on social media, insiders suggest that the speculation may not be entirely unfounded.

Some sources indicate that a couple of resignations from the IHC are expected by the end of next month.

To accommodate the new apex court, the IHC administration has allocated seven courtrooms to the FCC.

This has necessitated a major reshuffle, including vacating the offices of the AGP and the advocate general of Islamabad.

US designates Riyadh 'major non-Nato ally'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has designated Saudi Arabia a major non-Nato ally, cementing a significant upgrade in security and economic ties during Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's first visit to Washington since 2018.

"Tonight, I'm pleased to announce that we're taking our military cooperation to even greater heights by formally designating Saudi Arabia as a major non-Nato ally, which is something that is very important to them," Trump said during a formal black-tie dinner at the White House.

"And I'm just telling you now for the first time, because they wanted to keep a little secret for tonight," Trump said of the designation, which only 19 other countries have previously received.

The new status, which paves the way for deeper defence cooperation, was the capstone on a trip defined by a flurry of multi-billion-dollar agreements aimed at expanding the strategic partnership between the two nations.

Deals included the future sale of the US's most advanced aircraft — the F35 stealth fighter jet — with it the Saudis also received US commitments on a variety of



US PRESIDENT Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman arrive at the US-Saudi Investment Forum at the John F. Kennedy Centre.—AFP

issues and a major defence deal that the kingdom has spent years lobbying for.

But beyond deals, the trip also cemented the US's backing of Prince Mohammad following years of strained ties over the Khashoggi murder.

A landmark agreement on civil nuclear energy was also reached. US Energy Secretary Chris Wright stressed the deal's peaceful nature, focusing on the con-

struction of a large nuclear power plant for electricity.

"It is about civilian, civil use of nuclear power. It's not about enrichment. It's not about anything related to weapons. It's just about generating electricity, secure, reliable, affordable electricity," Wright said in an interview with *Fox News*.

In return, the crown prince pledged to increase Saudi investment in the United States to \$1tn

— up from an earlier target of \$600bn — though he provided no timeline or details for the ambitious commitment.

On the other hand, US and Saudi officials touted a series of new deals at a high-powered US-Saudi Investment Forum at the Kennedy Centre. The CEO of Saudi state oil giant Aramco, Amin Nasser, announced energy sector agreements with the US worth \$30 billion. The investment forum drew senior executives from Chevron, Qualcomm, General Dynamics and Pfizer, while Elon Musk and Nvidia's Jensen Huang took part in a panel discussion on artificial intelligence.

"The agreements finalised yesterday open the door for US companies to lead globally in innovation, in safety and in deployment," Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said.

Meanwhile, MP Materials said it would build a rare-earths refinery in Saudi Arabia in partnership with the US Department of Defence and the state-owned mining company Maaden. The project is intended to expand regional processing of minerals crucial to defence and technology manufacturing.—Agencies

World leaders lining up to join Gaza peace board, says Trump

• US president praises 'work being done by Hamas' • Washington asks Yemen to contribute to international force • EU eyes training Palestinian police personnel on West Bank model

WASHINGTON: The Board of Peace (BOP), which is slated to administer Gaza under the newly-approved US peace plan, may include the heads of many major world powers, President Donald Trump indicated.

"I hope your highness will be on the board," Trump says to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during a dinner the president is hosting for him at the White House.

"Everybody wants to be on the board, and it'll end up being quite a large board because it'll be the heads of every major country," the US president said, a day after the UN Security Council adopted a resolution giving the US-led BOP a broad mandate to manage Gaza until the end of 2027.

Trump also thanked MBS for the role he played in securing last month's Gaza ceasefire, without elaborating. During his remarks, the US president also had words of praise for Hamas, saying: "A lot of work has been done by Hamas, and a lot of a lot of people said they wouldn't be doing that".

He also said that there was a lot more safety in Gaza now than before the ceasefire.

Yemen asked to join ISF

Meanwhile, the government of Yemen has

been approached to join the international force that would be deployed at the war-torn Palestinian territory, it emerged on Wednesday.

Several Yemeni government sources told *AFP* that Washington had approached Aden to participate in the new International Stabilisation Force (ISF), although they insisted that a final decision is yet to be made.

However, officials insisted that any Yemeni contribution to the force would be largely symbolic. "If we do participate, it will be just a few officers or soldiers in the operations room and the contacts room for logistical purposes. They will not be involved in other operations under this scheme," a diplomat said.

Asked about the request, a US State Department spokesperson told *AFP* "we're not going to detail private diplomatic conversations," adding that Trump himself had said "there will be many exciting announcements in the coming weeks".

Yemen's internationally-recognised government is largely fractured and weakened after being kicked out of the capital Sanaa by the Houthi rebels in 2014, who now control most of the country's population centres. The Houthis are fierce allies of Hamas, and are likely to be infuriated by Yemeni participa-

tion in the proposed international force, which the Palestinian group has largely decried.

The government largely relies on backing by US ally Saudi Arabia, which led an international coalition from early 2015 that failed to dislodge the Houthis.

Asked about Yemen's incentives to join the force, the diplomat told *AFP*: "The issue is we cannot say no".

EU training

Meanwhile, the European Union wants to train up to 3,000 Palestinian police officers in the Gaza Strip under a scheme similar to one it already runs in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, an official said on Wednesday.

The UN-approved peace plan envisions the international force would work with Israel, Egypt and newly-trained Palestinian police to help secure border areas and demilitarise Gaza.

There will be a "need to stabilise Gaza with an important police force" if the current ceasefire endures, said the official.

The issue is likely to be discussed at a Palestinian donor conference, being held in Brussels today (Thursday).—Agencies

27 militants killed in KP operations

By Umer Farooq

PESHAWAR: At least 27 militants were killed and several others wounded in encounters with security personnel in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, sources said on Wednesday.

They said an intelligence-based operation was carried out on the reported presence of nearly two dozen terrorists in Kurram district's Manato and Marzai areas, sources said, adding that they were hiding in a residential area and planted explosives in a house. During the operation, they said, 22 militants were killed, while there were reports about some security personnel being injured due to an explosion, though locals remained unhurt.

No official statement was issued by the ISPR on developments in Kurram.

However, the military's media wing, in a post on X, stated on Wednesday night that in a failed attempt to target innocent civilians in Bannu, an Indian-sponsored terrorist got eliminated while planting an improvised explosive device.

The ISPR said: "The incident highlights the growing desperation of the khwarij, who, due to sustained and effective pressure from security forces and law enforcement agencies, were increas-

ingly resorting to cowardly attempts against soft targets. Their failed actions reflect their diminishing capabilities and frustration in the face of ongoing counter terrorism efforts."

Earlier, the military's media wing said that security forces carried out intelligence-based operations (IBO) on the reported presence of, what the official statement said Fitna al Khwarij, in Bajaur, North Waziristan and Dera Ismail Khan districts on Nov 17 and 18.

It said troops effectively engaged a terrorist's location in Bajaur. After an intense exchange of fire, one terrorist was killed. It read that more militants were neutralised in an IBO conducted in the Spinwam and Zakir Khel areas of North Waziristan district, while another terrorist was killed in Dera Ismail Khan.

In Lakki Marwat, two militants were killed in an exchange of fire with counter-terrorism department (CTD) personnel, police said.

A statement issued by CTD said the militants were killed during an intelligence-based operation carried out in Sraye Norang area of the district. It explained the militants opened fire on the CTD team as soon as they saw them. The CTD team retaliated and killed two militants, later identified as Mohammad Sohail and Azmatullah alias Hafiz.

US report credits Chinese weapons for Pakistan's success in May war

In report to Congress, Economic and Security Review Commission says conflict with India served as 'real-world field experiment' for Chinese arms

Dawn Report

KARACHI: Pakistan achieved "military success" over India during a four-day conflict in May, thanks to the effectiveness of Chinese weaponry, according to a recent report, submitted to the US Congress.

"Pakistan's military success over India in its four-day clash showcased Chinese weaponry," said the report, submitted by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

The commission reports to Con-

gress on the national security implications of the economic relationship between the US and China.

The annual report stated that the May conflict drew global attention as "Pakistan's military relied upon Chinese weaponry and reportedly leveraged Chinese intelligence".

It further cited claims from New Delhi that China provided Pakistan with "live inputs on Indian military positions throughout the crisis", a claim that Pakistan denied and China neither confirmed nor denied.

According to the commission, the clash was the first time modern Chinese weapon systems, such as the HQ-9 air defence system, PL-15 air-to-air missiles, and J-10 fighter aircraft, were utilised in active combat, serving as a "real-world field experiment".

As Pakistan's largest defence supplier, China provided approximately 82 per cent of the country's arms imports from 2019 to 2023.

The report suggested that while characterising the conflict as a "proxy war" might be an overstate-

ment of China's role, "Beijing opportunistically leveraged the conflict to test and advertise the sophistication of its weapons".

In the weeks following the fighting, "Chinese embassies hailed the successes of its systems in the India-Pakistan clash, seeking to bolster weapons sales", the report alleged.

During the conflict, Pakistan claimed to have downed five Indian planes, later raising the number to seven, and denied any of its own losses. US President Donald Trump later commented that, "essentially", eight planes were shot down.

The conflict was initiated by an attack on tourists in India-held Kashmir, which New Delhi attributed to Pakistan without evidence. Islamabad denied responsibility and called for a neutral investigation.

New Delhi then launched airstrikes in Punjab and Azad Kashmir on May 7, beginning the four-day clash as Islamabad retaliated. The conflict finally ended with a US-brokered ceasefire on May 10.

'Pakistan needs to 'do more' ahead of GSP+ review'

• Enforced disappearances, rights, labour issues in focus as mission prepares report • New scheme likely to become effective from 2027

By Nadir Guramani

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs to "do more" to meet its commitments under the GSP+ preferential tariff scheme, European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Raimundas Karoblis said on Wednesday, ahead of a review.

In an interview with *DawnNewsTV*, Ambassador Karoblis was asked whether Pakistan needed to do more to fulfil the scheme's requirements. "Yes, we are saying that," he replied. "We are saying that it should be, well, needs to be, to do more."

He said the visit would be a periodic monitoring mission to assess implementation of all necessary United Nations conventions, with "quite a lot" of meetings planned not only with state institutions but also

with civil society organisations, human rights defenders, companies and workers.

A report would then be issued with recommendations based on findings of UN bodies that monitor the conventions, he added, stressing that implementation was "really important". GSP+ status, granted by the European Union in 2014, has driven a 108 per cent increase in Pakistan's textile exports to the bloc through concessional tariffs.

In October 2023, the European Parliament unanimously voted to extend the arrangement until 2027, allowing Pakistan and other developing countries to continue enjoying duty-free or reduced-duty access for most exports.

The upcoming GSP+ monitoring mission, delayed from June because of the Iran-Israel conflict, will scrutinise



EUROPEAN Union Ambassador to Pakistan Raimundas Karoblis

Pakistan's compliance with 27 international conventions on human rights, labour rights, environment and good governance that underpin the trade scheme. Outlining areas of concern, the envoy pointed to

human rights, the death penalty, blasphemy laws, enforced disappearances, minority rights, women's rights, child labour and forced labour.

"It will probably be the last monitoring mission of the present GSP+ scheme, because the new scheme will enter into force soon, probably from 2027, and Pakistan will need to reapply in order if it would like to continue with the GSP+ preferences," he said.

"So it means that the report of the monitoring mission will be one of the most important sources assessing the progress and compliance with Pakistani commitments vis-à-vis the UN," he added. Mr Karoblis said the EU had already identified the main issues it was asking Pakistan to address, while noting that Brussels did see "certain progress".

On enforced disappear-

ances, he said the issue was one of the EU's "priorities". "We have questions and we see the problems in the context of the GSP+," he said.

"Of course, we understand that some structures were established, such as the Commission of [Inquiry on Enforced] Disappearances. Of course, we will look into whether it is enough, whether it is sufficient, but of course, we will have a lot of questions on that for the institutions."

Asked about the recently enacted 27th Constitutional Amendment, the envoy called it an "internal issue" but added that on judicial independence "we have different views". He said the EU was seeking opinions from the opposition, think tanks, civil society and international organisations working in Pakistan. He also underlined

the need to discuss recent military trials of civilians.

Noting a deteriorating human rights climate, former EU ambassador Riina Kionka had called on Pakistan in August to show "credible" and "visible progress" on human rights and labour reforms, signalling that the EU's next trade preference scheme would demand stronger compliance.

"Pakistan needs to show more visible progress, especially ahead of the upcoming GSP+ monitoring mission in November," she said.

Similarly, in January, the EU had warned Pakistan not to take its GSP+ status for granted. Olof Skoog, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, had urged the government not to use military courts to pursue cases against citizens, and opposed recent moves to restrict freedom of expression.

Taliban seek investment from Delhi

KABUL: The Afghan Taliban trade minister arrived in India on Wednesday on a maiden visit to draw greater investments and goods, as both countries consider ways to enhance their relations in the backdrop of Kabul's souring relations with neighbouring Pakistan.

India last month upgraded its ties with the Taliban by reopening its embassy in Kabul that was shut in 2021, following the withdrawal of US-led Nato forces. New Delhi is also ramping up its aid to the country as it competes with China for influence.

Minister Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi will hold talks with his Indian counterpart and the foreign minister, as well as with traders and investors, Afghanistan's commerce ministry said in a statement.

"These meetings will focus on expanding economic cooperation, facilitating trade relations, creating joint investment opportunities, and strengthening Afghanistan's role in regional transit routes," it added.

Landlocked Afghanistan is seeking access to grains, medicines and industrial goods following the closure of its border with Pakistan in recent weeks after armed clashes last month between the neighbours over cross-border terrorism.

In the past six months, Afghanistan's trade through Iran has reached \$1.6 billion, higher than the \$1.1 billion exchanged with Pakistan, Afghanistan's commerce ministry told Reuters.

"Advancing bilateral trade and investment ties are the key focus of the visit," Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for India's foreign ministry, wrote on X along with a photograph of Azizi's arrival in Delhi.—Reuters